

Skeletal remains found two decades ago identified as missing Hawaii man after cold case breakthrough

Story by Anna Wright

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The mystery surrounding skeletal remains discovered in [Portland](#) more than 20 years ago has been solved.

The remains were identified as Robert Lee Horton, 47, who had moved from [Hawaii](#) to Portland prior to his death, according to [Oregon](#) State Police.

Horton's scattered bones were discovered in December 2004 by two people exploring a wooded area near Riverview Cemetery.

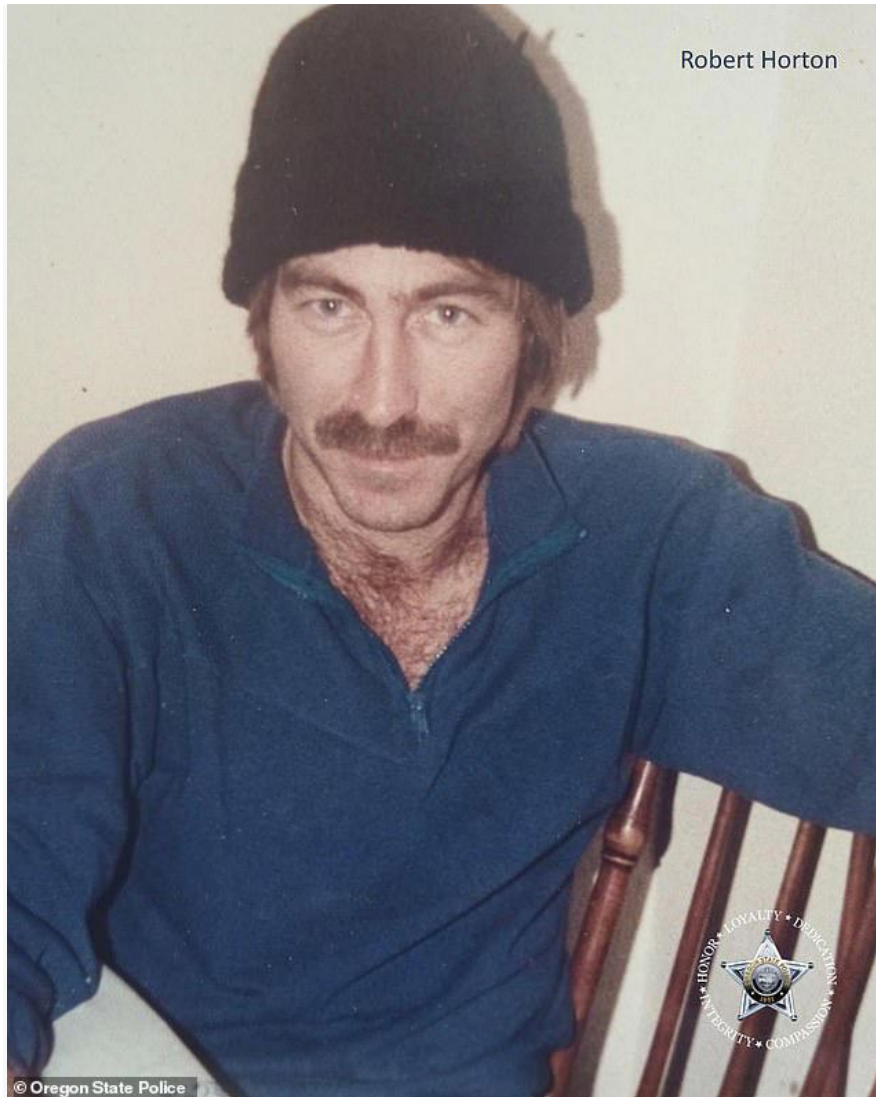
Investigators also found a fabric lean-to, cooking pans, food, and clothing at the scene, but no identification. A lean-to is a makeshift shelter often used for camping.

The coroner's office attempted an autopsy, but was unable to determine a cause of death.

Although the autopsy revealed little, investigators determined the remains were those of a white male, likely between age 45 and 55, and estimated to be 5'6" to 5'9" tall.

A DNA sample was later sent to the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification in 2010, but all database efforts to identify the skeletal remains came up unsuccessful.

Eight years later, investigators received a federal grant to use advanced DNA testing techniques to help crack unidentified remains cases.



The remains were identified as **Robert Lee Horton**, 47, from Hawaii

The team was able to extract DNA from the bone, and in 2022, they finally received a genetic genealogy report.

The test revealed Horton's distant family connections, and although investigators moved closer to solving the mystery, there was still little progress in identifying him.